

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling the time required to review multi-media program material comprised of:

selecting for playback from the multi-media program material, a first segment of the multi-media program material, based on a first criteria;

suppressing the playback of a second segment of the multi-media program material, based on a second criteria;

selecting for playback from the multi-media program material, a third segment of the multi-media program material, based on the first criteria.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said first criteria and said second criteria are comprised of indexes within said multi-media program material.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said first criteria is comprised of an index that identifies at least one of: the beginning and the end of a segment within said multi-media program material.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of suppressing the playback of a second segment is comprised of the steps of:

playing multi-media program material until a first index is located;

while said first segment is played back, locating a second index in said multi-media program material; and

at the conclusion of the play back of the first segment, playing back multi-media content after said second index.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said second segment is ordered after said first segment and said third segment is ordered after said second segment in said multi-media program material.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said third segment is ahead of said first segment in said multi-media program material.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said first segment selected for playback includes a segment of video of a first portion of said multi-media program material and a segment of audio of a second portion of said multi-media program material.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said multi-media program material is comprised of at least one of a televised sporting event.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein said first criteria includes a user's preferences to playback predetermined content.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein said first criteria includes a user's specified playback time of said multi-media program material.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting for playback, includes the steps of:

viewing said multi-media program material;

identifying content segments in said multi-media program material that conform to at least one criteria;

indexing said content segments by adding an index in said multi-media program; and

detecting an index in said multi-media program material to identify said first segment to playback.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting for playback, includes the steps of:

viewing said multi-media program material; and

annotating said multi-media program material.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein said first criteria includes at least one of:

detecting an image depicted in said multi-media program material;  
detecting an audio signal in said multi-media program material.; and  
detecting a camera angle at which content in said multi-media program material was captured;  
the presence of user-specified programmatic material in said first segment;  
the absence of user-specified programmatic material in said first segment;  
subject matter in said multi-media program material;  
a viewing angle at which a scene is captured;  
a user-specified time period, during which said multi-media program material is to be reviewed; and  
predetermined portions of a sporting event.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein the content for display is selected based on data embedded in said multi-media program material.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein the content for display is selected based on data transmitted with said multi-media program material.

16. The method of claim 1 further comprised of the step of: identifying the owner of intellectual property rights in a content segment.

17. The method of claim 16 further including the step of determining whether playback of a segment requires compensation to, or from , the owner of a segment.

18. The method of claim 1 further including the step of adding an overlay segment.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein at least part of said overlay segment is comprised of at least one of:

semi-transparent video; and  
opaque video; audio.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein at least part of said overlay segment is comprised of content that is determined by at least one of:

a user's preference;

the subject matter of at least one of said first, second and third segments;

the rate of playback of said multi-media program material; and

audio video content locally generated from information in at least one of an index file or other data file.

21. The method of claim 18 wherein at least part of said overlay segment is selected by at least one of:

a user's preference; and

a user's input.

22 A method for controlling the time requires to review multi-media program material comprised of:

previewing said multi-media program material;

adding an index to said multi-media program material by which selected segments of said multi-media program material can be identified for selective playback according to information in said annotation.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein said step of adding an index includes adding an annotation that complies with an MPEG standard.

24. The method of claim 22 wherein said step of adding an index is comprised of adding an annotation that includes a specification of the start time and stop time of information in said multi-media program material that conforms to a specification.

25. The method of claim 22 wherein said step of adding an index is comprised of adding an annotation that substantially contemporaneously describes information in said multi-media program material.

26. The method of claim 22 wherein said step of adding an index includes embedding an annotation in said multi-media program material that substantially contemporaneously describes content of said multi-media program material.

27. The method of claim 22 wherein the step of adding an index includes adding an index by which the owner of a content segment can be identified.

28. The method of claim 30 further including the step of: storing said multi-media program material and said index on a storage media from which said program material can be played back and from which said annotation can be detected.

29. The method of claim 22 further including the step of: transmitting said multi-media program material and said index.

30. A method of adding content to a multi-media program, said method comprised of:  
detecting a viewer's input control signal to a multi-media playback device;  
adding a content segment to a first multi-media program in response to the user's input control signal; and  
responding to the input control signal.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein the added content segment is at least one of:  
third party advertising content;  
viewer-supplied media; and  
an annotation.

32. The method of claim 30 wherein the added content segment is presented on a remote controller for a multi-media playback device.

33. The method of claim 30 wherein the added content segment is presented:

on a predetermined area of a first display device on which said multi-media program can be played back, said added content segment being presented substantially simultaneously with the display of said multi-media program.

34. The method of claim 30 further including the steps of:  
suspending the display of said multi-media program on a display device; and  
displaying said content segment on said display device while the display of said multi-media program is suspended.

35. The method of claim 30 further including the steps of:  
transitioning the display of first and second segments of said multi-media program; and  
adding said content segment between said first and second segments of said multi-media program.

36. The method of claim 30 wherein said step of adding a content segment is performed in response to a user's manual specification to suspend playback of said multi-media program.

37. The method of claim 30 wherein said step of responding to the input control signal is comprised of:

suppressing the display of a segment of said first multi-media program.

38. An apparatus for controlling the time required to review multi-media program material comprised of:

a multi-media playback unit, capable of selectively playing back segments of a multi-media program;

a memory wherein program instructions are stored;

a first controller, operatively coupled to said multi-media playback unit and to memory, said controller having at least one input performing the functions of:

i) selecting for playback from multi-media program material, a first segment of the multi-media program material, based on a first criteria; and

ii) suppressing the playback of a second segment of the multi-media program material, based on the content of the at least one second segment; and

iii) selecting for playback from the multi-media program material, a third segment of the multi-media program material, based on the first criteria.

39. The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said memory stores program instructions, which when executed cause the controller to perform the functions of selecting and suppressing multi-media content segments to play back.

40. The apparatus of claim 38 further including a wireless remote controller, operatively coupled to said first controller, said wireless remote controller capable of receiving information from said first controller and displaying content segments.

41. The apparatus of claim 40 wherein said wireless second controller is configured to display content segments that contain third party advertising messages.

42. Apparatus for controlling the time required to review multi-media program material comprised of:

media carrying indexed multi-media content.

43. The apparatus of claim 42 wherein media carrying indexed multi-media includes at least one of:

magnetic tape;

magnetic disk;

optical disk;

a radio frequency signal;

a fiber optic cable; and

a data network and portions thereof.

44. The apparatus of claim 42 further including an indexed multi-media signal playback unit, operatively coupled to said media and into which indexed multi-media signals are received and output to a display device.